

Advanced Education – Summit

C/O Advanced Education, Warrington School, Unit 2 Forrest Way, Gatewarth Industrial Estate, Warrington, Cheshire, WA5 1DF

Inspection dates	25–26 March 2013	
Overall effectiveness	Good	2
Pupils' achievement	Good	2
Pupils' behaviour and personal development	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Quality of curriculum	Good	2
Pupils' welfare, health and safety	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings

This school is good because

- The quality of teaching is good and enables students to make good progress with their learning, mostly from comparatively low starting points.
- The good curriculum is adapted flexibly to meet the immediate and long-term needs of students who are mostly placed at the school for relatively short periods of time.
- Students respond positively to adults and form constructive relationships which contribute strongly to improvements in their behaviour and social development.
- Arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of students are outstanding, based on rigorous collaboration between teachers and care staff.
- Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school. Regular evaluation of what the school provides ensures that teaching and students' achievement are continuously improved.

It is not yet outstanding because

- Current strategies for the assessment of students' work do not provide a consistent picture of the extent of progress across the full range of subjects studied.
- There are insufficient opportunities for practical and vocational learning within the curriculum.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010, as amended by The Education (Independent School Standards) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Information about this inspection

- The school was inspected following half a day's notice.
- Four lessons were observed, taught by three teachers.
- Meetings were held with the area headteacher, the lead teacher, classroom teachers, and students. A range of policy documentation was read and discussed, together with examples of students' work and records of progress.
- Additional information was considered from seven staff questionnaires, and one questionnaire completed by a parent or carer of a student.

Inspection team

David Young, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Advanced Education - Summit was registered as an independent special school in August 2007 and was last inspected in June 2008.
- It is a small co-educational school which caters for residential students in the age range 10 to 18 years.
- All students at the school have a statement of special educational needs identifying emotional, behavioural and cognitive learning difficulties.
- The school aims to equip its pupils for their future lives in the wider society by encouraging their personal development, and the promotion of excellence, equality and high achievement.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision at present.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that students' work in all subjects is assessed and recorded using National Curriculum levels and the grades or levels for external examinations being studied.
- Use the information from assessment to:
 - evaluate the extent of students' progress against national expectations
 - inform students about how they may improve their work and achieve higher levels.
- Ensure that students are encouraged to read aloud in class and that their success is celebrated.
- Widen the range of practical and vocational experiences available to students through the curriculum, including off-site educational visits.

Inspection judgements

Pupils' achievement

Good

Achievement is good. Students make good progress with their learning across a range of subjects. There is an appropriate emphasis on the development of students' skills in literacy and numeracy and students make good progress with these skills, usually starting from levels below those expected for their age. External examination results for recent students show good levels of success with unit awards, functional skills and GCSE examinations. On entry to the school students have typically missed significant periods of schooling or have had disrupted experiences as a result of regular movement between schools. The school is successful in identifying appropriate courses which enable students to achieve success rapidly at levels suited to their current levels of attainment. Students' progress during lessons is mostly good as a result of teaching which is planned carefully to match each student's capabilities. The curriculum provided for each student is adapted flexibly to ensure that all have the opportunity to achieve recognised qualifications; the great majority of students respond positively to these opportunities. All students who have completed their education at the school have moved on to productive activities in employment or further education.

Pupils' behaviour and personal development

Good

Students' behaviour and personal development are good and show visible improvement during their time at the school. Students enter the school with a history of social and emotional difficulties. The quality of relationships established in the school and in the residential provision provide students with positive role models and a sense of belonging. Students are encouraged to reflect on their behaviour and attitudes and the impact on others. There are incidents of unacceptable behaviour but these are managed well within the school's clear policies and procedures. Teaching staff convey clear expectations about students' engagement in activities and students respond positively. The school and residential staff are effective in monitoring any known traits in behaviour, recording incidents and working closely with external agencies where required. Students' attendance is good. The curriculum provides good opportunities for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students, particularly through work in personal, social and health education, religious education, humanities and music. The school ensures that the ethnic and cultural heritages of students are respected. Issues of stereotyping and prejudice are confronted through the curriculum and students are taught to develop respect and tolerance for diversity within the community. Themes within the citizenship programme also provide students with good opportunities to learn about and understand the role of public services and how they may contribute to the wider community. Students' personal interests are at the centre of decisions about membership or attendance at, for example, local youth clubs, the boxing club or dance classes. A wider, global dimension to students' experience to promote their knowledge of different cultures is provided through participation in the annual European Day of Languages and taking part in fund-raising for international charities.

Quality of teaching

Good

The quality of teaching is good and ensures that students make good progress with their learning. Lessons are well planned, based on schemes of work which set out the requirements for the external accreditations being studied. Teachers have a good understanding of the individual learning needs of students. Assessment of prior learning and discussion with students enable staff to quickly identify the level of challenge required in new work. Teaching staff are responsive to the personal, emotional and social difficulties experienced by students and take these into account in the levels of support and intervention provided in lessons. Students respond positively to their teachers and are willing to engage in conversation about their work and to discuss any areas of uncertainty. Teachers place an appropriate emphasis on the development of reading and writing

skills but there are missed opportunities to monitor students' reading aloud in subjects other than English. Teachers have high expectations of students' participation in lessons and students respond appropriately. They are skilled at re-shaping work or raising the level of challenge as students' needs become evident or as concentration declines. National Curriculum levels are used as a means for teachers to assess students' work, and teachers are aware of the standards required to achieve the required levels in external examinations. However, teachers' records of students' progress do not make consistent use of national levels and examination grades as a means of assessing the rate of progress and then to inform students about what they need to do to improve. Teachers are flexible in their planning and respond appropriately to students' expressed interests. In one lesson, for example, good use was made of a student's interest in music to extend his skill in playing the guitar and to retain his interest in the content of the lesson.

Quality of curriculum

Good

The quality of the curriculum is good and is mostly effective in meeting the individual needs of students and in enabling them to achieve well. There is an appropriate emphasis on the development of skills in literacy and numeracy. These are reinforced through the range of content and activities taught, for example, in science, religious education, information and communication technology, and personal, social and health education. Teachers are aware of the importance of the development of handwriting, spelling and punctuation, particularly for students who may have missed important aspects of learning in their earlier educational experience. The school is flexible in responding to the stated needs of individual students and is currently making arrangements, for example, for the introduction of a vocational programme in animal care. Students have good access to computers in the classroom and these are used well to encourage students to research and to extend their knowledge in various subjects. School staff work closely with residential staff to ensure that personal interests, for example in sports or dance, are provided in the local community. Occasionally, good use is also made of courses run by external providers or through joint activities with students from other schools operated by the proprietor. There are opportunities for practical learning in art, music and physical education but, overall, there are insufficient opportunities for students to experience practical and work-related learning. The school, through its curriculum, demonstrates a commitment to ensuring that students are well prepared for the challenges and responsibilities of adult life.

Pupils' welfare, health and safety

Outstanding

Arrangements for the welfare, health and safety of students are outstanding. Students enjoy a safe environment in which teaching and care staff work well together to ensure that the well-being of students is the main priority. All the regulatory requirements for independent schools are met. Arrangements for the safeguarding of students are implemented meticulously and all staff are trained to the required levels in child protection, with regular updates of their knowledge and skills. There are rigorous risk assessments in place for the premises and for fire safety; these are used and updated consistently as the basis for routine checks on the safety of the premises and equipment. Similarly, individual students are subject to risk assessments which are monitored and adjusted appropriately, with methodical attention to the recording of concerns, incidents and sanctions. The school has suitable procedures to address bullying and there have been no recorded incidents of bullying since the last inspection. The school has adapted the generic policies and procedures of the proprietor to the specific needs and circumstances of the school. Students can identify examples of teaching about healthy lifestyles, including healthy eating and the management of any smoking habits with planned progression towards cessation. Senior members of staff have attended safer recruitment training and all checks on the suitability of staff are implemented rigorously. The school's central register of checks on staff is up to date and thorough. All those adults who responded to the inspection questionnaires strongly agree that the school provides a very safe environment for students and that students' individual needs are known and met.

Leadership and management**Good**

The quality of leadership and management is good and all the regulatory requirements are met. The school's leaders have a clear focus on the personal development and academic progress of students. They ensure that the required experiences and facilities and good quality teaching are in place to enable students to address their social and emotional difficulties and to engage successfully in learning. The proprietor has created an effective management structure to provide hands-on guidance and review to support the work of the staff. The area headteacher works successfully with the school's lead teacher to ensure that individual students are provided with teaching across the full range of areas of learning. Arrangements for the performance management of teaching staff, including the evaluation of the quality of teaching, contributes to the creation of a learning community where all staff are focused on agreed goals. The premises provide a suitable setting for learning with a dedicated teaching room which is treated respectfully by students. There is currently a limited display of students' work and the appearance of the teaching room requires smartening up to create a more vibrant welcoming environment for teaching and learning. Open space in the local area and local sports centres are used effectively to provide for physical education. The school's prospectus provides prospective local authorities, parents and carers with the required information about the school, including details of the school's suitable arrangements for the management of any complaints. The school's leaders have a good understanding of the strengths of the school and of areas for further development. These are set out appropriately in a development plan which is used systematically to secure improvement.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of education and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of education that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of education it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and/or the quality of education has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	135312
Inspection number	385215
DfE registration number	354/6029

This inspection was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Special school for students with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties.
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	10–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Advanced Childcare
Chair	Riz Khan
Headteacher	Tariq Verpalen
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2008

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